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DOCUMENTARY TO HELP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS

A powerful new documentary that aims to inspire victims of domestic violence to escape the cycle of abuse premiered in Sydney today.

The documentary *Home is Where the Hurt Is* features first-hand stories told by survivors of physical and emotional domestic violence.

“Domestic violence is one the most underreported of crimes and victims often feel trapped in dangerous and abusive relationships,” said Brendan Thomas, Assistant Director General of the Department of Justice & Attorney General.

“This documentary depicts people relaying their harrowing experiences of domestic violence - women assaulted by their husbands, a lesbian woman locked in an abusive relationship, a man abused by his female partner and the personal story of media personality Mike Munro.

“The stories of these survivors are as confronting as their backgrounds are diverse, but all share the same message: seek help before it is too late.”

Home is Where the Hurt is premiered at Dumaresq Street Cinemas in Campbelltown as part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence.

Forty pairs of shoes were attached to a wall of the cinema to represent the number of people killed in domestic violence incidents in NSW in 2008.

“The documentary is not just for victims of domestic violence. It is a valuable educational resource that will enable the wider community to see what it is like to walk in the shoes of people who experience domestic violence,” Mr Thomas said.

The Department of Justice and Attorney General funded *Home is Where the Hurt Is* - a joint project of the Domestic and Family Violence Intervention Service, Macarthur Legal Centre and the Campbelltown Domestic Violence Liaison Committee.

The NSW Government has a suite of support services and initiatives aimed at bringing down rates of domestic violence and making it easier for victims to seek help and justice. These include:

- Allocating \$504,000 to establish the new Domestic Violence Homicide Review Panel to review closed cases and recommend improvements to the response to domestic violence by the many agencies involved;
- Rolling out new guidelines to fast track domestic violence cases through local courts;
- Allocating \$7 million per year to assist women at more than 100 NSW courthouses as part of the Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program; and

- Introducing the Domestic Violence Intervention Court Model (DVICM) in Campbelltown and Wagga Wagga.

“The DVICM aims to improve the policing and prosecution of domestic violence, while ensuring the safety of victims throughout the process,’ Mr Thomas said.

“It involves government agencies such as NSW Police and the Department of Justice & Attorney General collaborating with welfare agencies.”

From 2003 to 2008, the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research found 215 people died as a result of domestic violence, equating to 42 per cent of all homicides.

“One person lost through domestic homicide is one too many,” Mr Thomas said.